

Message Text

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14-12

ACTION EA-06

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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1962

SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE

INFO CINCPAC

USIA WASHDC

AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 4953

LIMDIS

USIA FOR IEA

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MARR, TH, CB

SUBJECT: US SUPPORT FOR CAMBODIA OUT OF THAILAND

REF: A) SECDEF 242016 MAR 75 B) BANGKOK 4793 C) BANGKOK 4794

D) STATE 066267

1. WE WERE SURPRISED BY DOD SPOKESMAN'S RESPONSE TO QUERIES ABOUT AIRLIFT (REFTEL A) IN VIEW OF CONCERNS EXPRESSED IN REFTELS B AND C, AND IN VIEW OF GUIDANCE DESCRIBED REFTEL D.

2. WE REALIZE DIFFICULTY FOR US SPOKESMEN TRYING TO AVOID REPLIES TO QUESTIONS PREVIOUSLY CONSIDERED ROUTINE. WE ARE CONFRONTED, HOWEVER, WITH THE FACT THAT OFFICIAL PUBLIC REFERENCES TO AMMO FLIGHTS OUT OF THAILAND JEOPARDIZE THE FLIGHTS THEMSELVES.

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3. WE MUST PREVENT PREDICAMENT IN WHICH PRESS CAN FOCUS ON US

SPOKESMEN SAYING AMMO FLIGHTS FROM UTAPAO CONTINUE DESPITE PRIME MINISTER'S PUBLIC STATEMENT THAT THEY MUST STOP, AND DESPITE EFFORTS BY OTHER RTG OFFICIALS TO PRETEND IN PUBLIC THAT THEY ARE IGNORANT OF THOSE FLIGHTS. IF WE APPEAR TO BE PUBLICLY CHALLENGING PRIME MINISTER, WE WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY TRIGGER RTG ACTION TO NOTIFY US OFFICIALLY THAT AMMO FLIGHTS MUST CEASE. THIS MOVE MIGHT COME ANYWAY, BUT RTG HAS SO FAR REFRAINED FROM MAKING IT AND EVIDENTLY DOES NOT WISH TO.

4. WE AGAIN HOLDING RESPONSE TO QUERIES ABOUT AIRLIFT TO TOTAL NUMBER OF FLIGHTS AND TOTAL CARGO ARRIVING IN CAMBODIA, WITHOUT IDENTIFYING ORIGINATING POINT OF PARTICULAR FLIGHTS OR TYPES OF CARGO, POINTING OUT ALSO THAT VIETNAM, AS WELL AS THAILAND, IS A POINT OF ORIGIN.

5. THOUGH NEWSMEN MAY VIEW SUCH RESPONSES AS POLITE FICTION, ALTERNATIVE OF SAYING MORE WOULD PUSH PRIME MINISTER CLOSER TO ACTION WE WANT TO AVOID.

6. PORTION OF MARCH 25 EDITORIAL IN ENGLISH-LANGUAGE THE NATION DEMONSTRATES SITUATION RTG HAS CREATED FOR ITSELF WITH PUBLIC COMMENTS ABOUT AIRLIFT. SAID THE NATION: QTE CREDIBILITY IN THE GOVERNMENT IS HIGHLY IMPORTANT. WE HAVE ALREADY SAID THAT THE DECISION BY THE GOVERNMENT TO STOP AIR SUPPLY OF AMMUNITION TO CAMBODIA IS UNENFORCEABLE. AND, TO BOOT, OUR TOP MILITARY OFFICER, GEN. KRIT SIVARA, SAYS THAT HE KNOWS NOTHING ABOUT IT. WAS THIS ANNOUNCEMENT BY BOTH DEFENSE MINISTER PRAMAN ADIREKSAN AND BY PRIME MINISTER KHUKRIT JUST GRIST FOR THE MEDIA OR WAS THE AMERICAN EMBASSY IN THAILAND TOLD ABOUT IT OR DID THE THAI EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON INFORM THE STATE DEPARTMENT? THE TRUTH IS THAT AMERICAN PLANES ARE FLYING SUPPLIES FROM UTAPAO TO PHNOM PENH AND WHENEVER THEY STOP IT IS NOT DUE TO WHAT THE THAI GOVERNMENT HAS TOLD THEM BUT BECAUSE OF THE ROCKETS WHICH THE KHMER ROUGE INSURGENTS ARE SLAMMING INTO POCHENTONG AIRPORT IN CAMBODIA UNQTE. MASTERS

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